PASS CHRISTIAN, MS

The Tricentennial

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BIDWELL ADAM

In celebrating the history of Pass Christian, I feel it is appropriate to recall one of its most illustrious citizens, Honorable Bidwell Adam.

Clayton Bidwell Adam served as Lieutenant Governor during the 1928-1932 administration of his fellow South Mississippian, Governor Theodore G. Bilbo of Juniper Grove.

Bidwell was descended from a political family and served successfully in public life while at the same time rising to the pinnacle of the legal profession. Bidwell was elected by his colleagues as President of the Mississippi Bar. He is remembered as a lawyer of consummate skill and good humor.

Throughout the entirety of his illustrious career, Bidwell Adam always cherished his home town of Pass Christian, Mississippi. He described the charming environs of his boyhood in his customary flowery language, calling Pass Christian "one of the jewels of the Mexican Gulf . . . where the sugary white sands are lapped with the ebb and flow of the tide twice in twenty-four hours, the mighty ships of commerce set their courses, and the majestic and shiny tarpon slips from the briny deep."

It is good that we share remembrances of the wonderful cast of characters who make up the history of our fair city.

Billy McDonald, Mayor

PASS CHRISTIAN

Tricentential Kickoff draws about 300 people

By KEITH BURTON

SPECIAL TO THE SUN HERALD

By all accounts, Thursday night's Pass Christian Area Tricentennial Kickoff dinner was an "amazing" success. The word amazing was on many organizers' lips as they watched the people arrive for the event.

Organizers would have been glad to see 200 people in the gymnasium at the St. Paul Catholic church to get the city's tricentennial project under way. But the room quickly filled with almost 300 people, all on hand to help raise money, have a nice dinner and to see the bronze bust of Pierre LeMoyne Sieur d'Iberville, the French explorer who first settled the Coast in 1699.

Pass Christian artist and sculptor Michelle Drane Smith was beaming as she unveiled the bronze bust of d'Iberville to a standing ovation.

Smith sculpted the bust from photographs of a portrait of d'Iberville. Her work will be one of the historical features and stories that will be assembled as part of Pass Christian's contribution to the Coast's Tricentennial celebration. Historians from the city and around the area hope to gather and organize historical information to present to schools as part of the celebration.

While Biloxi has been leading in the tricentennial effort, much of the Coast is being included in the event as it marks the tricentennial of the establishment of the Louisiana Territory.

"Yes, it is Biloxi's anniversary," said Dayton Robinson of Pass Christian's effort, "They were the first . . . but not the only."

IT HAPPENED!!

At the 8:00 a.m. wrap-up meeting on March 31, 1998, plans were finalized in preparing for the Kick-Off Dinner and d'Iberville unveiling. Printed invitations had been enclosed with the 800-plus newsletter mailing; Ken Austin and Tracy Gordon Goff were concluding their shopping list for food preparation by the Sheriff's department, and they scheduled picking up the eight-flags from the Mardi Gras Museum at Biloxi. Michelle Smith was off to collect the T-shirts with printed logos from Southern Printing with significant discount. (CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)

IT HAPPENED!

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The shirts had been donated by the Stuffed Shirts Factory as their parting gift to the community. Jean Moreland had a few more hand-made Magnolia table center pieces to finish off with her Friends of the Library and the Garden Club ladies. Lee Lizana checked off his pick-up and delivery schedule. Jessie Heitzmann introduced Signy Wagner as another "Volunteer." A.C. Smith wrapped up his agenda with a contemplative smile, as Peggy Johnson asked, "What else can I do?" Before the meeting ended, Ken Austin tuned the charge of remaining responsibilities to Virgil Harris who would manage the logistics at the St. Paul Auditorium and supervise the setting up and breaking down of the Dinner Event.

Two hours later, at the 10:00 a.m. Steering Committee meeting, some of the members were reported absent due to illness or pressing commitments. Those present were: Paul Bode, Rotary Club; Myrna Bourgeois, St. Paul Catholic Council; Betty Carlin, Historical Society; Regina Dailey, City of Pass Christian; Dana Dedeaux, DeLisle Area; Tracy Gordon Goff, Trinity Episcopal Church; Leroy Lizana, Cuevas Area; Charles Melson, Point/Isles Civic Association; Jean Moreland, Friends of the Library; Mary Catherine Ward, Garden Club; and George Watson, Harrison Tourism. Officers present were Dan Ellis, Chairman, A.C. Smith Vice-Chairman, Dayton Robinson Treasurer, and Peggy Johnson Recording Secretary. Ellis reported the results of the Kick-Off Committee since co-chairs Ken Austin and Tracy Gordon Goff were off on their chores and Peggy Johnson assumed her minutes taking. Dayton Robinson reported on the Budget Meeting of the Executive Committee, which proposed that an "Endowment Fund" be established with a goal of raising $100,000.00 from private funds that would be used as matching funds to encourage additional financial support from government, corporations, and other agencies in meeting an over-all goal by the end of 1999 of $200,000.00.

On Wednesday, before the Event, a call to Tracy Gordon Goff was received as she expressed her elation in that she had conquered putting a large Magnolia atop the 2-foot-square cake she had baked. "I took pictures to show those commercial bakers who said it couldn't be done -- that it got done! -- and I did it!," she exclaimed.

At the appointed hour of noon, Virgil Harris's set-up team started arriving. Once more, the Kick-Off team went into action: Michelle and A.C. Smith, Ken Austin, Tracy Gordon Goff, Dan Ellis, Lee Lizana, Jessie Heitzmann, and Signy Wagner moved bleachers and relocated sheets of 12-foot sheetrock. Two large risers were brought down from behind the auditorium stage, and below the raised stage, eight carts were hauled out with tables to be assembled upright, guided by Virgil's instructions to refrain from scuffing the gymnasium flooring.

Steve Foster backed up his truck and started unloading his lighting system, while Virgil was testing the sound system, and the chairs were placed into position attending the more than 40 tables that were waiting to be dressed out. Tracy, Jessie, Signy and Michelle cleaned table tops and chair-seats. Lee Lizana took off to make his errand runs for food and ice pickups. Dayton Robinson arrived to help put coverings on the tables and set up the serving tables.

At 4:00 o'clock the next shift arrived as individual helpers went home to freshen up and change clothes. Jean Moreland, Mary Catherine Ward, Helen Davis and ??? arranged the decorous table centerings. Hank Rodrique and Bernie Schmaltz organized the food table arrangements. Paul Bode arrived with canisters and a large "Money Bowl" and set up the "Greeters Table."

Virgil Harris and the Smiths set up the

IT HAPPENED!!

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75-pound d'Iberville upon its pedestal, draped it, as Steve Foster tested the special lighting effects.

At 5:30, some of the invited guests started arriving. The boy scouts reported in and the high school students from OLA, St. Stanislaus and Pass Hi arrived for Flag duty. Food trays were streaming in from Cafe du Soleil, Cafe St. Louis, Annie's, Chimneys, Harbor View Cafe, The Rusty Pelican -- followed by a cadre of crisply uniformed prisoners led by Deputy Sheriff Favre carrying pots, pans, utensils and food trays. And lastly, Tracy Gordon Goff arrived with her unbeatable Magnolia-icing, decorated cake.

In the meantime an outpouring of guests were flowing in as they sought seating. By 6:00 the food line was already extending to the entrance doorway. For a full hour, guests continued arriving and the program which Ken Austin promised to start promptly at 7:00 p.m., was delayed because of the extended food line.

At 7:15, Ken Austin called the large gathering to order and acknowledged the presence of elected officials: Supervisor David LaRosa, Mayor Billy McDonald, Aldermen Chipper McDermott, and Alderman Michael Antoine. All seats were filled and a large number of guests were standing in the periphery of the auditorium. The Boy Scouts posted the Flag and lead the Pledge of Allegiance and were retired by Scout Master Gary Mac Kenzie. Myrna Bourgeois announced the students of the Classes of 1999 and 2000 who volunteered to bear the eight flags of Mississippi heritage. Each Flag Bearer's partner rendered an historic sketch of the flag they represented.

Master of Ceremonies Billy McDonald continued the program by first stating his visions for 1999, "The development of a history curriculum for the Pass Area and on Mississippi. That more organizations and churches get involved in joining those already represented. That all the merchants, business folks, and public officials join hands in making a great Year of Celebration of the City's wonderful heritage. Also, that the Artists, Poets and cultural people produce historically oriented material, and that all the adjoining areas of DeLisle, Vidalia, Cuevas, Pineville, Henderson Point and the Isles -- unite in spirit in celebrating our 300th birthday."

Dayton Robinson delivered the Mission Statement as incorporated in the official Tricentennial Charter, ". . . including the celebration of the colonization started by d'Iberville and Bienville, promoting educational programs, placing an emphasis on historic community landmarks throughout the greater Pass Christian Area, and the inculcation of a renewed appreciation of Pride, Awareness and Community Spirit." It was noted that the large gathering was a true demonstration in response to Community Spirit with one of pride and heritage awareness.

With the unveiling of the d'Iberville statue, all the guests rose up in spontaneous applause to sculptor/donor Michelle Smith. Her efforts and signal contributions were well appreciated both for her artistic talents and her community outgoing support. The gift is valued at $5000.00 in addition to the several trips to the Louisiana foundry in assisting in its conversion from the original clay model to the bronzing. The statue is scheduled to tour the different schools and public buildings in the Pass Christian area. It will be available for initial viewing at City Hall beginning mid-April.

Dr. Philip Terrell, unfolded a history of Pass Christian and was so convincing in his call for action, and the need to raise funds for a permanent heritage endowment fund, that Supervisor David LaRosa rose to the occasion by sending forward a brief written message to Billy McDonald. Following Superintendent Terrell's

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stimulating talk, the Mayor announced that David LaRosa wished to "cast-the-first-die" in support of the special heritage Endowment Fund with a $10,000 contribution. The spontaneous gesture was received with roaring acclaim by all in attendance. The Mayor stated his support and asked everyone to make a meritorious gesture with their individual financial participation and involvement.

The program was spiritually administered with am Invocation by Rev. Christopher Colby of Trinity Episcopal Church and a Blessing tendered by Rev. Ron Herzog of St. Paul Catholic Church.

As all things must come to an end -- even when it's just the beginning -- the members of the Kick-Off Committee rolled up their sleeves -- and transformed into being the "*Clean-up Committee*" However, joining in with the spirit of cooperation, were: Alderman Michael Antoine, Superintendent Philip Terrell, John Harris, Dana Dedeaux, and Diane and Wally Farragut. Within an hour, the Auditorium was returned to its Gymnasium status with all tables returned under the stage, the risers positioned back atop the platform, the chairs stacked once more against the outer wall, and the floors -- swept, the kitchen -- spotless. and the garbage containers -- emptied. Needless to say, everyone was tired and weary, but grateful for the wonderful turnout of Pass Christian area citizens and support groups, and the generous contribution made by David LaRosa. As everyone said their "Good-nights," Ken Austin was still repeating, -- "Amazing!"

D'IBERVILLE ON TOUR

D'Iberville's Bronze Bust can be viewed at City Hall. Various artifacts of Pass Christian's heritage are planned to accompany the Tour planned for the Tricentennial focal-point. With the formation of an Endowment Fund, the invested net proceeds will be used for the employment of a full-time person (heritage oriented curator) to be in charge of a repository of archival material and artifacts, the development of an educational curriculum on Pass Christian History for use by the Pass Christian Area School System, for research and documentation on Gulf Coast colonial history, and to establish controls for the preservation, security, and recordation of documents, books, maps and graphic materials, and computer and electronically generated files and records, or other media. Contributions are being accepted.

Merchandise Available: Map Set III, containing 13 maps of the Pass Christian Area, from 1769 to current, and a 10-page narrative on the *Chain of Ownership*, from earliest history, is available for $10.00.

PASS HIGH ALMA MATER 1909-1959

On our State's fair southern border,
Reared against the sky,
Proudly stands our Alma Mater
As years roll by.

Chorus:
Forward! Ever! Be our watchword,
Conquer and prevail
Hail to thee, our Alma Mater,
Pass Christian All hail.

Let us greet our dear old High School
With a hearty cheer!
With our faces all set onward,
Voices ringing clear.

SAGE OF AGES

When Bertha Giani heard that Pass Christian was preparing to celebrate its Tricentennial 1999, she immediately delved into researching the consequences of d'Iberville and wrote the following prosaic style poem. Unstinted by the fact that she was living in a retirement home, she checked herself out, rented an automobile, and drove from Ocean Springs to attend the Tricentennial Kick-Off Dinner. She immediately ingratiated herself with her many friends and intended to present her literary gift that night. But due to a tight program and the lateness of the hour, she was undaunted when told that she could not be scheduled, but was promised that her devotion, dedication, time, and efforts would not be in vain.

TRIBUTE TO PIERRE LEMOYNE, SIEUR D'IBERVILLE

I sing of the man of deeds
who first came to the Mississippi shore
In search of land for the French king
After having battled the British in Hudson Bay
Pierre LeMoyne, Sieur D'Iberville was his name.

He arrived with the *Badine*
with 300 men or more
and 50 cannons on board;
dropped anchor by the isle offshore
whence he proceeded to discover
the coast with long boats,
founding Fort Maurepas in Ocean Springs,
then an Old Biloxi shore.

Canadian he was,
as many of his mates on board
who ventured forth on the mighty river.
Names like La Salle, Tonti
and the founding Jesuits, yet, he got along
With the local Indian sakes, learning their tongue

From his brother and others;
(Pasca means bread
and Goula means Indian,
for the Indians who made the local bread.)

He befriended many Indians
giving them gifts,
the Chukassaws, the Choctaws,
the Alabams, the Chicacheess,
the Chaquetas, the Tahomes
And the Mobilians to the East,
distributing presents
such as gun flint and shots,
axes, knives, kettles, and glass beads.

He relied on their directions
to explore the mighty river,
discovering a body of water
He named Pontchartrain
in honor of the Minister
of the Marine,
then in the service
of King Louis the XIV.

From d'Iberville's Journal I quote:
I rejoice to see you disposed
to live in peace with one another
and with all the nations of the region.
And to the Chicachas he promised
his men then to escort
to make peace with the Illinois,
former enemies now Friends for peaceful reason.

After having visited Mississippi
for the third time, he died
in Havana, July 9, in 1706,
where he is now buried
in the Church of San Cristobal,
since destroyed, precise site unknown,
but his memory in Mississippi
will forever live on.

Great Applause and Thanks to our Food Sponsors

Local restaurants sending mouth-watering and zesty dishes to the Kick-Off Dinner were: Annie's, Cafe du Soleil, Chimney's, Harbor View Cafe, Rusty Pelican, St. Louis Cafe, and Naomi's Catering. And a special thanks is extended to Ken Austin and Tracy Gordon Goff for their shopping and donating the foodstuffs prepared by the Sheriff's Culinary Chefs. A warm and grateful thanks to all -- for the good time had by all.

ANNUS MIRABILAS

An exhibit to commemorate the *Year of Wonders* in the Mississippi Territory has opened in Jackson running through November 8, 1998. *Annus Mirabilas* occured in 1811 when the New Madrid Earthquake caused the Mississippi River to flow backwards, and the Great Comet appeared in the sky, and the first Steamboat traveled up the Mississippi River.

April Activities

19th:

Farewell Reception honoring Father Ron, following 6pm Mass

Wine and Cheese Party sponsored by Friends of the Library, 5pm to 7pm at Library.

22nd:

Earth Day is set aside for making us more aware of our environment and how to take steps to protect its beauty for future generaations.

26th:

Blessing of the Fleet, Noon to 4pm, entertainment, food, and refreshments

Legend of the Birds

Former resident-columnist, Mrs. Elizabeth Merriwether Gilmer used the famous *nom de plume* of "Dorothy Dix." In writing her syndicated column, *Letters to the Lovelorn*, while in the shade of her gardens at 730 W. Beach Boulevard, she would often retell the Indian legend of the birds.

"Back in 1519," according to the legend as told by Miss Dix, "a handsome young Spaniard of royal birth, in the spirit of adventure, brought a group of explorers to the Gulf Coast to chart the lands that belonged to the Crown. Drifting with the tide one breathless summer day, he heard the enchanting music of a strange songbird in the primeval forest, and following the exquisite notes, found a beautiful Indian maiden lying beneath the bough of an ancient oak tree. Here in the wilderness, he learned to love not only the maiden, but all of her feathered friends whose haunting songs had lured him to this enchanted land.

"But the charts were finished and his companions, impatient at his long delay, set sail one moonlit night, and as he lay sleeping, the seawinds rocked him onward to Spain. The Indian maiden overwhelmed with grief for her lover, threw herself into the waters of the Sound. But her spirit lives, so the legend tells us, in the songbirds at Pass Christian, and tragedy is supposed to befall the person who kills a bird in this area."

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Pass Christian Historic District

Following the devastation by Hurricane Camille to the beachfront property of Pass Christian, three concerned residents, Pat Mowry, Betty Rogers, and Otis Trepagnier contacted then state senator, Nap Cassibry, to assist them with the necessary requirements for creating an Historic District.

After determined research, Nap Cassibry advised the group on the proper procedure and paper-work processing necessary for submission to State and National Archival agencies. Nap Cassibry offered to meet with the group and a city alderman once they decided on their course of action.

At a meeting in Pat Mowry's home, attended by Alderman Charles Logan, Betty Rogers, and Otis Trepagnier, Nap Cassibry informed them and instructed Logan on the required City Resolution that had to be adopted by the City Council in order to move the plan forward. This occurred in 1976 with the support of Mayor Steve Saucier.

Once the adopted resolution was presented to the Mississippi Department of State Archives and History, the group was notified that they would require a $5000 cost outlay for the necessary Architectural Survey and nominating form reports that were necessary.

Pat called once more for Nap's assistance stating "now that we have the City Resolution and the State concurrence to proceed with a Survey, the problem now is the necessary fee coverage for a $5000 survey." Nap went back into action and contacted Elbert Hilliard, Director of the Mississippi Archives and appealed for the State to underwrite the cost of the Survey on a pro bono basis. With considered reservation, concurrence was eventually effected which resulted in a two-year survey requiring Historic District definition, house to house detailed architectural descriptions, and photos with home ownership verification.

Finally, in 1979, completed nomination forms were submitted to the National Register of Historic Places with the Department of the Interior.

Due to the efforts of these few interested individuals, the Pass Christian Historic District has resulted in preserving the nature of the homes and the heritage of one of the single-most in-tact heritage districts in the United States. This beautiful beach front could have been lost to uncontrolled housing developments and destructive renovation constructions, which would have destroyed the essence of Scenic Drive and the other community residences that are a part of the defined Historic District. As a further result, all interested residents who owned or acquired property in the District, have been able to benefit by low-interest federal loans, providing that they adhered to the exacting compliance of State and National heritage rulings for the Historic District.

One of the first Federal grants issued was secured by Robert Goff in 1980. In full compliance with the new restrictions, "*The Fitzpatrick House,*" now the "Blue Rose," was fully rehabilitated and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

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The Tricentennial

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